

**Advisory Council for the Education of Students with Disabilities
Approved Minutes**

**July 20, 2009
1256 Foster Avenue
TPS Campus, Hardison Hall
Nashville, Tennessee 37243**

Members of the Council in Attendance

David Blier
Paula Brownyard, Chair
Samuel Cole
Chip Fair
Jeff Finney
Winnie Forrester
Janelle Glover
Pam Hudson
Mary Donnet Johnson

Christine Lloyd-Burkes
Beulah C. Oldham
Fran Powers
Sebrena St. John
Cindy Storey
Shannon Taylor
Darlene Walden
Myles Wilson

Members of the Council Not in Attendance

Dawn Bradley
Pamela Burns
Kyle Hauth
Cynthia Higginbotham, Vice-Chair

Catherine Knowles
Sharmila Patel
Jim Topp
Tonya Watson

State Employees in Attendance

Bob Blair, TN Department of Education/Division of Special Education (TDE/DSE)
Joseph Fisher, TDE/DSE
Jessica Harbison, TDE/DSE
Nan McKerley, TDE/DSE
Branson Townsend, TDE/Division of Accountability, Teaching & Learning
Mary Jane Ware, TN Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services
Bill Wilson, TDE/DSE

Visitors in Attendance

Carrie Hobbs Guiden, The Arc of Tennessee
Treva Maitland, The Arc of Tennessee
holly lu conant rees, Disability Coalition on Education
Loria Richardson, The Arc of Tennessee
Patricia Valladares, STEP, Inc.
Susie Wilkins, Vol. TN Board / Williamson County Schools

Welcome

Paula Browyard, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and then called the meeting to order. She proceeded to lead the Council members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Acceptance of Agenda

The Council voted in favor of accepting the agenda.

Approval of Minutes from April 20, 2009 Meeting

The Council voted in favor of accepting the minutes.

Report from Chair

- * Regional meeting sites –Paula asked David Blier to inform the Council of the options available to allow interested parties in more remote locations to participate in Council meetings. The main purpose of this effort is to encourage an increase in public input. After discussing all options, the Council voted in favor of broadcasting meetings via the web beginning with the July 2009 meeting and continuing for one year as a pilot period. Information on how to access the meetings online will be distributed through local education agencies (LEAs), advocacy groups and posted on Advisory Council webpage on the TDE/DSE website as soon as it is available.
- * Special Education staff changes – Sheryn Ordway and Karen Willis joined the Office of Data Management Services. Veronica McDonald filled the position of Director of Program Improvement and Gayle Feltner joined her staff as the Secondary Transition Consultant. Ann Sanders-Eakes was also named Director of Compliance Monitoring.
- * Pam Hudson recently retired from the Hamilton County Board of Education, and thereby resigned her position on the Council. On behalf of herself and the other Council members, Paula presented Pam with a Certificate of Appreciation for her work over the last few years. Pam's resignation left a vacancy on the New Goals Subcommittee, which Mary Donnet Johnson volunteered to fill.

Public Input

No one was present to address the Council at this meeting.

Approval of 2007-2008 Annual Report

The 2007-2008 Report was approved as presented, with a request that, in the future, any changes made to the report be tracked for easier reference.

IDEA Eligibility Determinations for Children with Downs Syndrome

Joseph Fisher was introduced to present and discuss a clarification memo that was issued on June 3, 2009 regarding eligibility determinations for children with Downs Syndrome. The memo explains that students with Downs Syndrome meet the standards for Mental Retardation disability category. Students who meet the requirements for other categories with similar factors, such as Speech/ Language Impairment, Developmental Delay or Other Health Impairment should have those needs listed as a Secondary Disability.

Winnie Forrester pointed out that classifications like Mental Retardation can restrict program options, whereas, for instance, Developmental Delay gives more flexibility. Mr. Fisher reassured her that parents are welcome, and encouraged, to give input and make requests they feel are appropriate during the IEP team meeting. Ann Sanders-Eakes added that there is always a range of appropriate services for each disability category and services rely on the team's decision.

New Compliance Manual

The floor was given to Ann Sanders-Eakes to talk about changes to the Special Education Compliance Manual. The Office of Compliance Monitoring looks for non-compliance at the district and student levels. The most significant change to the manual will be how instances of non-compliance are tracked and corrections verified. The Office of Compliance Monitoring is also moving to better align with the TDE/DSE fiscal monitoring. The revised Compliance Manual will be published and made available on the TDE/DSE website in August, with orientations conducted in September.

Graduation Rates and New Requirements

Connie Smith, Assistant Commissioner of Accountability, Teaching & Learning, was unable to attend today's meeting due to a scheduling conflict. Branson Townsend, Executive Director of Secondary Education, stood in her stead. Mr. Townsend informed the Council of parent training and orientation being provided through collaboration between the TDE/DSE and other divisions, which can be accessed online via the TDE website. Anyone interested in getting more detailed information can go to <http://www.tennessee.gov/education/index.shtml>, and click on the "TN Electronic Learning Center" link, then choose the "2009 High School Policy" for a Powerpoint presentation and answers to frequently asked questions. Dr. Smith will also make every attempt to attend the October meeting to address any remaining questions.

Other New Business

- * The proposed amendment to the Council by-laws which would change the election of Chair and Vice-Chair from every year to every two years has been withdrawn by Jim Topp via email. Upon further investigation, TN Code Annotated provides that elections must be made annually; therefore, any changes to this schedule must be made by the state legislature.
- * The Council set a tentative meeting schedule as follows:
 - October 26, 2009
 - January 11, 2010
 - April 19, 2010
 - July 19, 2010

The meeting was then adjourned.